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INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION AND CONSULTATIONS

Recommendations for follow-up action by UNIDO
to the World Summit for Social Development

Submitted by the Director-General

Summary

Discusses UNIDO participation at the World Summit and provides recommendations for follow-up action to the Summit by UNIDO in its field of competence.

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Introduction

1. The present document addresses Board decision IDB.13/Dec.22, of 11 November 1994 on the World Summit for Social Development. In that decision, the Director-General was requested: (a) to continue his efforts for the contribution of UNIDO to and participation in the World Summit; and (b) to submit to the Board without delay his recommendations for follow-up action to the World Summit by UNIDO in its field of competence.

I. BACKGROUND

2. The Director-General headed the UNIDO delegation to the World Summit, which took place at Copenhagen, Denmark, from 6 to 12 March 1995. In its presentations and through a series of bilateral meetings, the delegation emphasized and elaborated how social development can be achieved through industrial development as the engine of economic growth and actively promoted awareness of the role of UNIDO in that context.

3. Relevant material distributed at the Summit included a UNIDO fact sheet; a UNIDO position paper entitled "Social progress through industrial development"; industrial project profiles: "Empowering people through industrial development"; and a UNIDO information kit. A number of press releases and feature articles were issued on the occasion of the Summit.

4. The UNIDO standpoint at the Summit was that social development must be part of a comprehensive development agenda, conceived to bring about socio-economic change for the improvement of the living standards of the world population, but particularly of those nations and segments of the population that have been left behind. Unless economic development took place in a sustained manner, through real growth in investment, production, and employment — along with improvement in key social indicators — it was not possible to achieve long-term social development.

5. The UNIDO standpoint also premised that international cooperation in industrial and technological issues was more important than ever before to achieve rapid and sustainable industrialization and make it compatible with social goals. Today, trade and investment liberalization, regional economic integration, a technological revolution in communications and transportation and a growing awareness of living in the same environment on the same planet posed a global challenge to industrialization and development that demanded global approaches, solutions, networks and expertise.

II. THE DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION: RELEVANCE FOR UNIDO

6. The Programme of Action adopted at the Summit calls upon the United Nations agencies to give greater emphasis to the overriding goals of eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment, and fostering social integration. In this context, the Programme also refers to industrial activities — primarily small-scale, rural informal and agro-industry — as well as to issues related to human resource development, the role of women, technology, and energy, thus forming a clear mandate for the entire United Nations system to strengthen activities in these areas.

7. Among the specific areas and appeals in the Programme of Action that are directly linked to the mandate and field of competence of UNIDO are:

(a) Promoting enterprise and productive investments and expanded access to open and dynamic markets;

(b) Promoting greater access to technology and technical assistance;

(c) Paying special attention to the development of small-scale and micro enterprises, particularly in social (rural) areas;

(d) Increasing the availability of credit and market information to small entrepreneurs;

(e) Enhancing the production capacities of indigenous peoples;

(f) Enhancing opportunities for the creation and growth of private sector enterprises;

(g) Achieving food security by ensuring a safe and nutritionally adequate food supply;

(h) Facilitating the integration and reintegration of women within the work force.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP BY UNIDO

8. Based on the Programme of Action, UNIDO will continue to strengthen its efforts to develop integrated packages of industry-for-social-development services covering:

(a) Infrastructural development to promote socially-oriented industrial growth;

(b) Transfer and adaptation of industrial technologies having a significant social impact;

(c) Development and application of appropriate technologies for local production to satisfy basic needs (food, clothing, health, housing and energy);

(d) Promotion and upgrading of micro industries as a means to broaden entrepreneurship and increase participation;

(e) Development of industry-related services as a means to generate urban employment;

(f) Development of small- and medium-scale industries geared to the creation of employment, including for people of disadvantaged groups;

(g) Promotion of agro-related, regional and rural industrial development;

(h) Upgrading of human skills and management systems to meet the challenges of globalization;

(i) Further strengthening of activities for integrating women in industrial development;

(j) Industrial recovery in the context of post-emergency assistance.

9. In the above areas, UNIDO will seek the involvement of other United Nations specialized agencies and endeavour to jointly develop and implement relevant support programmes. Initiatives will be taken to this effect once the mechanism for system-wide consolidated follow-up — which is in the process of being established — has been institutionalized. UNIDO will play its part in promoting, demonstrating and supporting the essential role of industrial development as an effective instrument of social development.

10. The core themes of the Social Summit have been linked to UNIDO participation in two future

United Nations global meetings: (a) the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held at Beijing, China, in September 1995; and (b) the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) to be held at Istanbul, Turkey, in June 1996.

11. Furthermore, UNIDO has contacted the United Nations Development Programme Resident Representatives and UNIDO Country Directors (UCDs) and solicited their cooperation on potential follow-up action by UNIDO with regard to industry and socially sustainable industrial development. In particular, UCDs were requested to assure that the social development dimension is adequately addressed in the programmes and projects of the Organization at the field level.

12. Taking into consideration the themes of the Social Summit, efforts have been initiated to integrate social aspects in the programme development process. In particular, the UNIDO programme on human resource development has been restructured and is being directed towards a comprehensive and integrated approach whereby policy and strategies would be used as a better framework for understanding the interface between the social and economic factors. In this context, a primary concern is the mainstreaming of women and the re-integration of young micro-entrepreneurs from rural and marginalized population groups.

13. As another follow-up to the Social Summit, research has been initiated on employment and social issues related to industrialization for inclusion in the documentation for the Global Forum on Industry to be held at New Delhi, India, 16 to 18 October 1995. A panel is planned at the Forum to consider the issues related to industry, employment and social development.

IV. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE BOARD

14. The Board may wish to take note of the present report.